

OFDA/SOPAC EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRES COURSE

FINAL EXERCISE

EXERCISE CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

The final exercise is a decision-making and response exercise in which participants are expected to apply the skills learned during the course to operating an EOC. Exercise inputs simulate the delivery of messages from lower-level and single agency EOCs, ministries, government agencies and national entities such as power, water and communications authorities. The participants are expected to sort, collate, display and analyse this information then make decisions concerning the way in which they would deal with the situations presented. They should then initiate the communications to implement the required actions. If the EOC considers that it does not have enough information to make decisions it will be expected to seek further information by communicating with the appropriate authorities (represented by the Exercise Control Cell). This information may not always be available! At the end of the exercise the EOC staff will be expected to make a final group presentation, in the form of a handover to a new EOC shift, and a group report on their activities.

Exercise Controller

A member of the Training Team will act as Exercise Controller and oversee the conduct of the exercise, monitoring the flow and modifying input as required to ensure that the aims are met. The Exercise Controller will facilitate the debriefing and presentation at the end of the exercise and be prepared to make final comments.

EOC Staffing

Depending on the size of the group being trained, one or more EOCs may be established. No EOC should be so overstaffed that some participants gain little or no training value or so understaffed that the participants have only enough time to complete administrative tasks and cannot spend time on decision-making and response. A staff of between six and ten people would be ideal for each EOC; i.e. if the course has twelve or more participants, two EOCs should be planned. If available, additional communications staff should be provided to free course participants for the more important information management and executive tasks.

Control Team Staffing

To support the Exercise Controller, at least two Control Team staff are needed for each EOC. Ideally these should be members of the Training Team with experience of EOC operations but experience in an operational uniformed service (military, naval, police, fire etc) is also appropriate.

Control Team Roles and Functions

The roles of the Control Team are:

- a. represent the various EOCs, ministries, agencies and authorities that might provide programmed input to the EOC by transmitting exercise input messages at appropriate times and by providing reactive input in response to communications from the EOC staff; and
- b. monitor the exercise activities of the EOC, noting decisions made and providing appropriate responses that demonstrate the implications of the decisions. The Team should warn the Exercise Controller if EOC staff appear to be lost, uncertain

- or overwhelmed. The rate of input can then be modified or additional inputs provided.
- c. be prepared to comment on EOC performance after the final presentation.

EOC Equipment Requirements

Each EOC needs a room with enough space for participants to work comfortably. Basic equipment requirements are as follows:

Communications – One, or preferably two, communication links (telephone, radio etc)
Furniture – Tables or desks, chairs, flip chart easel, whiteboard(s). Clock.
Display Boards – for maps, charts etc (if wall space is not available)
Displays – Maps of Tone or (for a national workshop) national maps (preferably laminated). A few basic displays may also be provided
Forms – An initial supply of Message Forms, Operations Room Log Forms, Situation Report Forms, Master File Log Forms, Communications Log Forms etc
Stationery – Paper, pens, dry-wipe whiteboard pens, manila folders, paper clips, straight edge, flip charts for preparation of displays.

Control Team Equipment Requirements for each EOC

Communications – Equipment to communicate with the EOC (telephone, radio etc)
Furniture – Tables or desks, chairs, Whiteboard for each EOC plus one for overall control. Clock.
Maps – Maps of Tone or (for a national workshop) of the country to keep track of EOC activities and deployments
Input Material – Copies of Exercise Input Schedules, Briefing SITREPs etc, Resource Lists, for each EOC, Tone (or national) EOC Manual, Policy, Plans, Programmes and Projects for Emergencies and Disasters any other relevant documents
Message Forms
Stationery – Paper, pens, dry-wipe whiteboard pens, manila folders, paper clips.

Operational procedures

Before the exercise, control staff should familiarise themselves with the initial briefing material provided to each EOC, particularly the Tone material, and with the use of the communications.

When the participants are installed in the EOC, Control Staff pass messages in accordance with the Exercise Schedule. All available means of communications should be used in order to familiarise participants with the use of Message Forms etc. Some, but not all, longer messages may be provided on paper as simulated Emails or Telex messages.

In addition to the programmed messages, the Control Team can be tasked by the Exercise Controller to provide additional inputs to stimulate discussion, decision-making or actions, particularly if the EOC appears to be getting bogged down in detailed administration.

The Control Team will also accept messages and act as representatives of outside agencies. Incoming telephone calls from the EOC should be answered as “Switchboard” and the caller asked “Who do you wish to speak to?” The call can then be answered by a member of the Control Team acting as the representative of the requested agency. Similarly the radio callsign for incoming calls is “Communications Centre” and a Control Team member acting

as the representative of the requested agency can then answer the call as the appropriate agency.

Details of information or resources requested should be noted and appropriate responses made. A log of resources committed is to be maintained on the Resources List to ensure that resources are not committed more than once.

Visits to the EOC

Members of the Control Team may be tasked by the Exercise Controller to visit the EOC acting as representatives of agencies or as Control Observers, providing advice and noting the systems in use and the actions being taken.. If enough Control Staff are available, representatives may also be specifically tasked to act as Full-Time Observers/Advisers. Control Team members tasked to visit the EOC should carry a simple badge that shows who they are and should act in that role throughout their visit.

Debriefing

The Final part of the Exercise is a simulated handover to a new EOC Shift followed by a group report. During the handover, Control Team members may react as members of a new shift taking over and ask questions if any subject is not clear. They may also raise relevant questions after the group report.